

Durham YouthWork Internship Program (YouthWork) -- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why are internships so important?

Internships benefit employers by establishing a diverse talent pipeline and by reducing recruitment and training costs. It benefits students by making a clear connection between classroom activities and a successful career. Research has shown that work-based learning opportunities, such as internships, reduce dropout rates, and makes dropout recovery programs more successful. Youth and young adults in Durham who are not working or in school cost local, state and federal taxpayers \$63 - 84 million each year - an expense we can ill-afford in this time of shrinking public resources. Internships benefit everyone by helping to keep youth and young adults in school. They prepare youth for good jobs thereby strengthening our economy and our community.

What is the timeline for the Internship Program?

The Durham YouthWork Internship Program can match youth to internship opportunities **year round**. There are young people serving as interns in organizations from five to twenty hours a week. If you are interested in an intern during the regular year, please contact our offices. While there are year round opportunities, a big emphasis of the program is the Summer Internship Program.

Key Dates for Summer Program:

Late February through Early April- Youth apply for Summer Internships through City of Durham Jobs application

February through April- Businesses and Organizations are recruited to participate as internship sites.

Late April through Early May- Youth are interviewed by program staff or businesses.

Mid May- Youth are selected and matched to businesses and organizations

Mid June- Youth participate in 4-day pre-employment training

Late June through Mid August- Youth carry out internships in sites throughout the community

How long are the internships?

Internships offered during the year can vary based on the needs of the employer and the youth's schedule. Summer Internships are from 6-8 weeks and are usually 30 hours a week.

How much does it cost to host an intern?

Youth ages 14-15 years old earn \$7.25 an hour. Youth 16-21 years old earn \$8.25 an hour. The cost for a site to host an intern can range from \$1,400 to \$2,400 based on the number of weeks and hours worked.

Who pays the intern and assumes liability for the intern?

This can be arranged in several ways dependent on the needs of the employer. The youth can be an employee of the business or organization and receive their pay and workers compensation coverage through the employer. Sites can also provide funds directly to the City and the intern will then be an employee of the City and receive their pay and coverage through the City. Businesses can also financially sponsor interns that are placed in other organizations. In that situation, the City will be the employer and be responsible for the intern.

How are the interns selected and matched to businesses? Can businesses interview the candidates?

Once youth have submitted the City of Durham online job application they are invited to an interview. At the interview the young person completes a skills assessment and is interviewed by volunteers from the city, county and partner organizations. They are asked about their skills and interests. The volunteers score them based on their interview. Program staff then matches the applicants by scores, skills and interests to the internships available.

If there are sites that would like to interview potential interns, staff will select several applicants that appear to be a good match for the position. Those applicants will be passed on to the businesses and interviews will be arranged between the applicants and the businesses.

What are the responsibilities of the businesses that provide internship opportunities?

Businesses and organizations that provide internships are providing an incredible opportunity to help young people to learn job and life skills. For many of the interns this is their first real job. Sites will need to provide a safe working environment, oversight, and any specific training needed to carry out assigned tasks. First it is important that the site create a series of projects or work for the intern to carry out. While these tasks can be simple and entry level, there does need to be enough work to fill the time of the internship. It is amazing how quickly a motivated teen can organize a storage room or sweep a warehouse. When possible, include projects that teach new skills to the intern. The internship should help build job and career skills. Program staff can help with the design of meaningful work. The youth will need to be given clear expectations on their tasks. Unlike a regular employee, the intern may need

more direction on how to accomplish a task and how to use the tools necessary to complete their tasks. Interns will also need regular feedback on both the quality of their work and their professionalism.

Sites will also be expected to record attendance and provide that to the YouthWork staff. YouthWork will provide the necessary paperwork and provide instructions. Interns will also need time to attend YouthWork Pre-Employment and In-Service workshops. The pre-employment workshop is considered a critical part of the internship and participants will be paid by their host sites to attend the workshop. Sites will receive regular visits from YouthWork program staff to review their performance and provide additional support when needed.

What can I expect from my intern? What if it doesn't work out?

Young people in the YouthWork Summer Internship program receive a four day training on how to work in a professional setting. They receive guidance on dress, communication, and professional expectations such as arriving on time. Of course receiving the training is no guarantee that they will follow the guidelines perfectly. They are teenagers! We encourage sites to make their expectations clear to the interns. That includes dress, behavior, phone use, promptness. Sites should also let interns know when they are not meeting these expectations. YouthWork staff will also provide regular visits to check to see if needs are being met for the site and the intern. Staff will provide coaching to the intern if they are not meeting expectations. If they continue not to meet expectations after this coaching, they will be removed from the internship.

How do I register to host an intern?

Businesses and organizations can sign-up or serve as a host site on the City of Durham, Office of Economic and Workforce Development website. The link is http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/oewd/Pages/position_request.aspx. Interested groups can also contact the YouthWork program directly and we can take your registration over the phone. The main contact is Malinda Todd at 919-560-4965. Businesses will need to provide information about their organization and the description of the work that they will provide.